

Environmental Quality Commission

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ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMISSION

14 REILLY ROAD

FRANKFORT, KY 40601-1132

PAUL E. PATTON
GOVERNOR

March 20, 2003

The Honorable Paul E. Patton
State Capitol
Frankfort, KY 40601

Dear Governor Patton,

The Environmental Quality Commission (EQC), a seven-member citizen board that advises the Governor and other state officials on environmental matters, asks for your support for the inclusion of a \$5.0 million land purchase program for the Daniel Boone National Forest (DBNF) in Fiscal Year (FY) 2004.

Funding for a DBNF purchasing program is currently not included in the federal budget as proposed by President Bush. In the past, funding has been included to purchase unique natural areas in the Daniel Boone National Forest. The U.S. Forest Service indicates there is some 39,200 acres of priority tracts of land that have been targeted for purchase at a cost of \$21 million.

A \$5.0 million request will allow the DBNF to purchase some of these priority sites, including land along the Rockcastle River and in the Red River Gorge. The Red River Gorge is an area of the forest known for its rugged beauty of towering cliffhines, scenic arches and deep gorges. The gorge is often called the "Grand Canyon of the East" and attracts thousands of visitors every year. Acquisition of these lands will also improve the quality of streams that supply the Kentucky River, a source of domestic water supplies for many communities along the Kentucky River.

We hope you will join us in supporting a \$5.0 million request for the DBNF FY 2004 land purchase program. The Daniel Boone National Forest is one of the most heavily used forests in the South, with over 5 million visitors annually coming to backpack, camp, picnic, rock climb, boat, hunt, fish and relax. The DBNF contributes greatly to our economy and is critical to maintaining the state's biological diversity.